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Making Sausage at Home

Making sausage at home can be a fun-filled and rewarding family project. A number of sausage varieties not readily available in supermarkets can be prepared at home. Sausage seasonings can be adjusted to suit individual taste when they are prepared at home. If homemade sausages are prepared with careful attention to sanitation and are kept cold, a safe and wholesome product will result.

Fresh, smoked, and fermented sausage are prepared by commercial sausage manufacturers. Safe preparation of smoked and fermented sausages require equipment and controls beyond what is available in most home kitchens.

This publication gives directions for making a currently popular beef salami or beef summer sausage. Many unsafe versions of this recipe are circulating in Minnesota so carefully follow the directions given here.

DANGER — FOOD POISONING!

Ground meat is an especially attractive medium for bacterial growth. Grinding the meat exposes a great amount of meat surface to bacteria in the air. Grinding also releases meat juices that contain nutrients for bacteria. Some bacteria may cause the sausage to spoil, other bacteria can cause illness. The name of botulism food poisoning comes from the Latin word for sausage—*botulus*.

Keep the temperature of the meat mixture as low as possible to prevent bacterial growth (below 40°F if possible). Quickly chill finished sausage—the freezer is a good place for rapid cooling. Refrigerate cooled sausages and use in two days or freeze for late use.

INGREDIENTS

- Pork** — The following recipes all call for pork and pork fat. Commercial fresh sausage may contain 35-50 percent fat. These recipes call for 25-30 percent fat. Fat contributes to the juiciness of sausage and carries the flavor of the various added herbs and spices. Extremely low-fat or lean sausage mixtures will be dry and tasteless. Unfortunately, the fat content of "tasty" sausage makes a significant contribution to the calories.

If you raise your own hogs, use the lean meat from the trimmings from hams, loins, necks, and other large pieces. You will also have the various kinds of fat—the hard fat from back (fat backs) and leaf lard (from the kidney areas). Do not use hog lymph nodes or cheek meat. This meat can contain the bacteria which causes staphylococcus food poisoning.

If you buy meat in supermarkets, save the meat trimmed from loin pork roasts and chops to add to the lean pork or use cuts like pork butt or shoulder where the proportion of lean to fat is about 3 to 1.

- Casings** — Natural casings are tubular membranes that hold the sausage together. Casings may be from lamb, beef, or

pork. Hog casings are the cheapest and most readily available. Many butchers use hog casings for breakfast and Italian sausage and will sell you what is needed. Each recipe in this sheet requires several yards of casing.

When purchased, the casings look like wet spaghetti. Be sure to keep extra casings packed between layers of coarse salt in the refrigerator. They will keep for a long time when packed this way.

To prepare natural casings, run water through the casing for 10 minutes, then remove excess water. Slip casing length of 2 to 3 yards onto sausage stuffer. Allow the first 2 inches to hang loose or the casing will become inflated with air. Stuff loosely.

Sausage casings also may be filled with a pastry bag, but this method may be more tedious.

Sausage meat may be stuffed in small pieces of cheesecloth. Dip the cheesecloth in melted lard, spread the sausage like a cylinder, roll up the cheesecloth and tie on each end.

- Salt** — All recipes in this fact sheet except the beef salami use only ordinary table salt.
- Pepper** — Fresh ground is best.
- Herbs** — Sage, marjoram, summer savory. Dry herbs should be pungent and not old and flavorless.
- Spices** — Ginger, nutmeg, caraway seeds, fennel seeds, peppers.
- Ice** — Ice is needed to keep the ground meat mixture cold prior to stuffing into casings or shaping. Certain recipes suggest that ice be ground into the meat mixture.

EQUIPMENT

cutting boards	freezer wraps	sausage stuffer or pastry bag	
sharp knives	sausage casings	measuring spoons	} scalded
meat grinder	scales	wooden spoons	
plastic bags			

PRECAUTIONS

- Cut the meat (lean) into chunks and weigh. Cut fat into chunks and weigh. Try to get 25-30 percent fat and 70-75 percent lean. Keep the meat and fat very cold prior to grinding; slightly icy is best.
- After the meat is through the grinder, add some ice cubes to clear out the remaining meat and fat.
- Keep the ground meat cold by holding the pan in an ice bath or refrigerating it between steps.
- Work with small quantities of meat. A total of 5 lbs. of ground meat is a good size batch. It is dangerous to keep large amounts of meat out at room temperature—the danger of bacterial contamination of the mixture increases with bigger batches.

5. Have equipment clean and scalded. Never use hands for mixing sausage. Hands and nails should be scrupulously clean. If you have any boils or infections on your hands, do not prepare sausage.
6. Before stuffing the sausage, test the seasoning in your sausage by cooking and tasting a small amount. This will enable you to adjust the seasonings.
7. Refrigerate sausages immediately. They can be quickly chilled by placing on a tray in the freezer compartment for 10 minutes.

RECIPES

Beef Salami (Beef Summer Sausage)

The following points are CRITICAL in preparing a safe beef salami.

Precautions

1. Add no more than the amount of sodium nitrite-containing curing salt specified in this recipe.
2. Refrigerate the uncooked mixture in a cold refrigerator—35°F for no more than 24-36 hours before cooking.
3. Do not mix the meat and ingredients more than once. This only increases the bacterial load in the interior of the meat roll.
4. The diameter of the roll of salami should not exceed 1½ inches.
5. Baking temperature should not be lower than 175°F (or lowest marked degree setting on your oven). Put a meat thermometer in the end of the sausage roll. The internal temperature should be 150°F in one hour.
6. Keep the sausage roll refrigerated after cooking.

- 1 pound fresh regular ground beef (30 percent fat)
- 1-1½ level teaspoons curing salt (contains 0.5 percent sodium nitrite)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon freshly-ground black pepper
- few drops liquid smoke (optional)

Place all ingredients in a clean bowl. Thoroughly mix using a scalded spoon. Using a piece of wax paper or plastic film, shape the mixture into a one pound roll no thicker than 1½ inches in diameter. Refrigerate the wrapped roll for 24-36 hours. Bake on broiler rack at 175°F (or lowest marked degree setting on your oven) for 4 hours. Store in refrigerator until used.

Breakfast Pork Sausage

- 2½ pounds pork (75 percent lean, 25 percent fat)
- 2 teaspoons sage
- 1½ teaspoons marjoram
- 1 teaspoon savory
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper

Cut pork into cubes and put through meat grinder using coarse blade. Flush with 3 ice cubes.

Add spices and mix with wooden spoon.

Grind on finer blade. This helps to distribute fat, lean and seasonings.

Chill meat while preparing casings. Stuff sausage into casings or form into 2 rolls for slicing.

Refrigerate immediately or freeze. Use frozen sausage within 2 months. Use refrigerated sausage within 2 to 3 days.

Italian Sausage

- 2½ pounds lean pork
- ½ pound lean beef
- 1 pound fresh pork fat
- 10 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 teaspoons red pepper
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds, crushed
- 1 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 4 bay leaves, crumbled
- 1½ tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg

Grind meat on coarse dice.

Crush garlic. Add this and all other ingredients to the meat. Grind again on coarse dice. Test for seasoning. Stuff into casings or form into 3 large rolls for slicing. Follow basic precautions as before. Use within 2 days or freeze.

Bratwurst (mild seasoning)

- 3½ pounds boneless pork butt
- ½ pound beef stew meat
- additional pork fat to make 30 percent fat
- 4 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon caraway seed
- ¼ cup dry white wine

Cut meat and fat into cubes. Put meats through food chopper fitted with coarse blade. Add seasonings. Put through food chopper with fine blade. Test seasonings. Stuff into casings or form into 3 rolls for slicing. Chill rapidly and refrigerate to use within 2 days or freeze.

COOKING SAUSAGE LINKS

To cook homemade fresh sausage links place sausage links in skillet, add ¼ cup water, cover and allow sausages to simmer for 5 minutes. Remove cover, pour off water and drippings, lower heat and brown sausage over slow heat for 15 minutes. It may be necessary to pierce the casings with a fork to allow fat to escape.

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